

AMENDMENT

Amendments to the Claims

1. (original) A surgical instrument, comprising:
 - an end effector responsive to a longitudinal firing motion to perform a surgical operation;
 - a shaft distally connected to the end effector;
 - a firing member within the shaft to transfer the firing motion to the end effector; and
 - a handle proximally connected to the shaft and firing member, comprising:
 - a housing,
 - a firing control configured for manual movement by an operator in a firing direction and in an opposite return direction, and
 - a firing mechanism frictionally biased to couple with said firing member when said firing control moves in said firing direction.
2. (original) The surgical instrument of claim 1, wherein said end effector comprises a stapling device responsive to the longitudinal firing motion to perform the surgical operation of stapling.
3. (original) The surgical instrument of claim 2, wherein said end effector comprises:
 - an elongate channel connected to said shaft;
 - an anvil pivotally coupled to said elongate channel for clamping tissue; and
 - a staple cartridge received in said elongate channel;wherein said firing member distally terminates in a firing bar operably configured to actuate said staple cartridge to form staples in the clamped tissue.
4. (original) The surgical instrument of claim 3, further comprising a closure means of said stapling device.

5. (currently amended) The surgical instrument of claim 1, wherein said firing mechanism is frictionally biased such that it is adapted to disengage to decouple with said firing member when said firing control member is moved in said return direction.
6. (original) The surgical instrument of claim 1, further including a rack movably coupled with said firing member and operably coupling with said firing mechanism when said firing mechanism is actuated.
7. (currently amended) The surgical instrument of claim 1, wherein said ~~handle~~ firing mechanism includes at least one friction surface for biasing said firing mechanism into coupling engagement with said firing member in response to movement of said firing control in the firing direction.
8. (currently amended) The surgical instrument of claim 7, wherein said firing mechanism member includes a biasing surface, said biasing friction surface engaging said friction a biasing surface in response to movement of said firing control in the firing direction to bias said firing mechanism with said firing member.
9. (original) The surgical instrument of claim 8, wherein said firing control further comprises a trigger, an upper portion of said trigger traversing an arc during manual movement, at least a portion of a selected one of a group consisting of said friction and biasing surfaces being arcuate.
10. (currently amended) The surgical instrument of claim 8, wherein a selected one of a group consisting of (i) said friction surface and (ii) said biasing surface is deformable.
11. (currently amended) The surgical instrument of claim 10, wherein the selected one of the group consisting of (i) said friction surface and (ii) said biasing surface ~~[[is]]~~ comprises an elastomer.
12. (original) The surgical instrument of claim 8, wherein the selected one of the group consisting of said friction surface and said biasing surface is smooth.

13. (original) The surgical instrument of claim 8, wherein the selected one of the group consisting of said friction surface and said biasing surface is toothed.
14. (currently amended) The surgical instrument of claim 9, wherein the selected one of the group consisting of said friction surface and said biasing surface has a coefficient of friction between ~~about~~ approximately 0.04 and approximately 0.4.
15. (currently amended) The surgical instrument of claim 8, said biasing surface ~~comprises~~ is a wheel.
16. (currently amended) A surgical instrument, comprising:
 - an end effector responsive to a longitudinal firing motion to perform a surgical operation;
 - a shaft distally connected to the end effector;
 - a firing member slidably ~~receiving~~ received by the shaft to transfer the firing motion to the end effector; and
 - a handle proximally connected to the shaft and firing member, comprising:
 - a rack distally coupled to the firing member,
 - a firing control responsive to an operator to move in a firing direction and a return direction, and
 - a firing mechanism including a frictionally biased pawl ~~frictionally biased~~ adapted to couple the firing control to the rack to impart the firing motion in response to movement of the firing control in the firing direction and ~~frictionally biased to uncouple~~, wherein further said pawl is adapted to disengage the firing control from the rack in response to movement of the firing control in the return direction.
17. (original) The surgical instrument of claim 16, wherein said end effector comprises a stapling device responsive to the longitudinal firing motion to perform the surgical operation of stapling.

18. (original) The surgical instrument of claim 17, wherein said end effector comprises:

an elongate channel connected to said shaft;

an anvil pivotally coupled to said elongate channel for clamping tissue; and

a staple cartridge received in said elongate channel;

wherein said firing member distally terminates in a firing bar operably configured to actuate said staple cartridge to form staples in the clamped tissue.

19. (currently amended) A surgical instrument, comprising:

an end effector responsive to a longitudinal firing motion to perform a surgical operation;

a firing actuator ~~responsive to a user to~~ operably configured to produce the firing motion in response to a user; and

a firing means for frictionally coupling the firing motion of the firing actuator to the end effector.